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Dry Mesa Dinosaur Quarry

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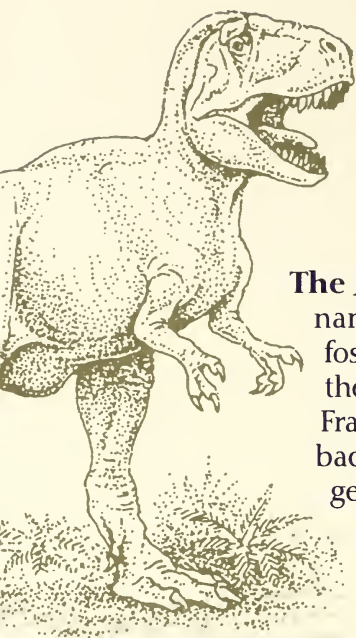
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Uncompahgre National Forest



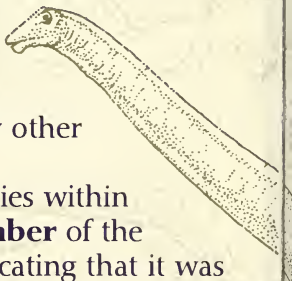
Rock of Ages

The Jurassic Period was named in 1829 for the fossil-rich limestone of the Jura Mountains in France. The rocks date back to the period of geologic time from about 208 - 144 million years ago. By the end of the Jurassic Period, the

largest species that ever roamed the Earth had evolved; some weighed 60 tons, almost 10 times the size of modern elephants.

The Morrison Formation is a layer of rock within the Jurassic Period. The distinct multi-colored purples, greens and grays easily identify this strata. The conditions for preservation were so perfect within the Morrison that it has unveiled more Jurassic dinosaur fossils than any other formation.

The Dry Mesa Quarry lies within the **Brushy Basin Member** of the Morrison Formation indicating that it was formed on the tail end of the Jurassic Period.





Discovery

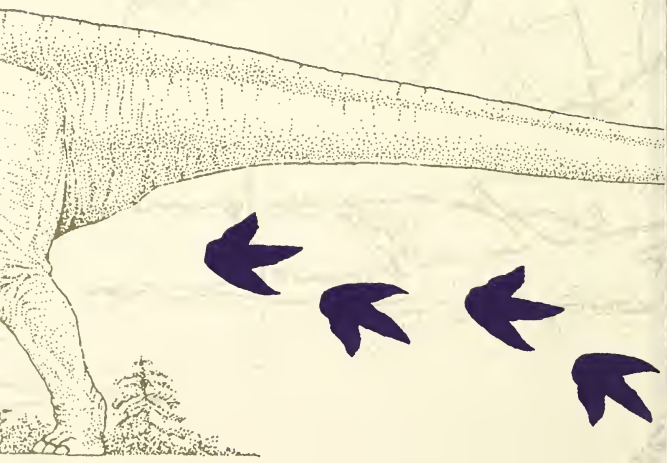
Local rockhound Vivian Jones was exploring one weekend with her family when she came upon a large fossil. Recognizing it as a dinosaur bone, she contacted Dr. James Jensen of Brigham Young University. Dr. Jensen applied for a permit from the Forest Service and began excavating the site in 1972.

Since that time over 4,000 bones have been collected and studied. Today, the Dry Mesa Quarry is the best in the world for Jurassic Period specimens.



Drought & Death

How did these fossils get here? Scientists believe that two events, a drought and a flash flood, caused the remains of many animals to be buried and preserved at Dry Mesa. First came a drought so extreme that lakes and ponds dried up leaving only a few small watering holes. Many animals in search of these remaining water sites died from starvation and dehydration or fell prey to carnivores. This type of mass death left many dismembered bones in a relatively small area. Then as animals continued to gather around the Dry Mesa watering hole, a flash flood occurred, creating rapid burial of both dead and live animals.



Creature Feature

A long time ago small ornithopods evaded predators, massive brachiosaurs towered above trees, pterasaurs flew overhead and powerful carnosaurs ravaged prey on the ancient lands of the Uncompahgre National Forest.

Thirty different creatures including dinosaurs, pterosaur, crocodile, turtle, lungfish and a shrew-like mammal have been collected at Dry Mesa Quarry. Such a variety of animals in one location is unusual and the mix of dinosaurs is particularly rare.

Large four-legged, plant-eating dinosaurs called sauropods uncovered at Dry Mesa range in size from hatchlings to giants. The quarry has revealed some of the world's largest sauropods including the 120 foot long *Supersaurus*.

Meat-eating dinosaurs are called theropods, literally named "beast foot" for their sharply clawed three-toed foot. Famous theropods from Dry Mesa Quarry are *Allosaurus* and the only known specimen

of a megalosaurid called *Torvosaurus*, the largest meat-eater of its day, weighing 2 tons and standing 35 feet tall.





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More on Dinosaurs

Information about dinosaurs and the Dry Mesa Quarry can be obtained from:

US Forest Service

For information on visits to the quarry.

Montrose, CO 970-240-5400

Delta, CO 970-874-6676

Brigham Young University Earth Science Museum

Museum featuring late Jurassic animals. Official depository for the Dry Mesa Collection. Collection is open to the public upon appointment.

Provo, UT Museum: 801-378-3680

Curator: 801-378-3939

Delta Historical Museum

Houses a large collection of fossilized dinosaur bones from the local area.

Delta, CO 970-874-8721

Devil's Canyon Science and Learning Center

Displays the discovery and geology of Dry Mesa Quarry, robotic dinosaurs and hands-on activities.

Fruita, CO 970-858-7282

Dinosaur Valley

Exhibits skeleton casts, a working paleo lab and moving replicas.

Grand Junction, CO 970-241-9210

Dusty the Dino says:

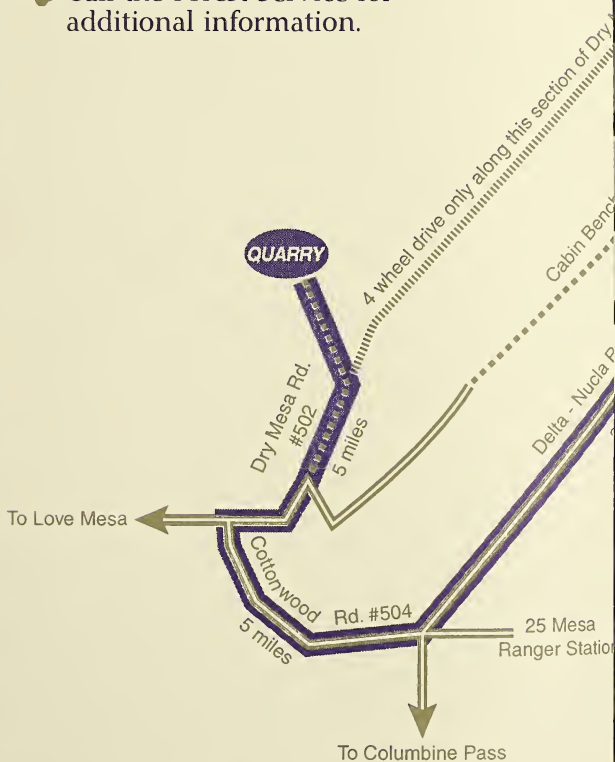
*"Protect
Fossil
Resources"*



Visiting the Quarry

The quarry is open to visitors; however, the best time to visit the quarry is when workers are on site. The quarry is buried when workers are not present.

- There isn't any water at the quarry.
- Tables are provided at the trailhead.
- When wet, dirt roads become muddy and dangerously slick.
- It's a 1/4 mile hike to the quarry and the views are worth every step!
- Call the Forest Service for additional information.





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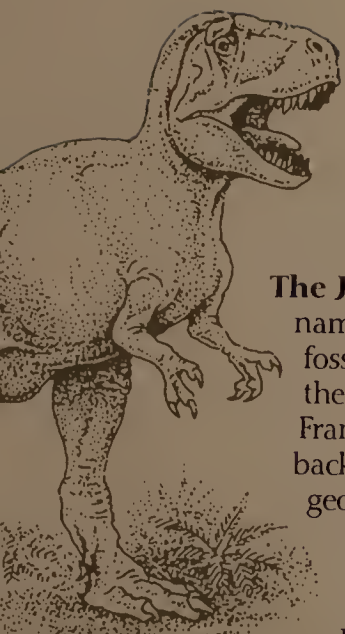
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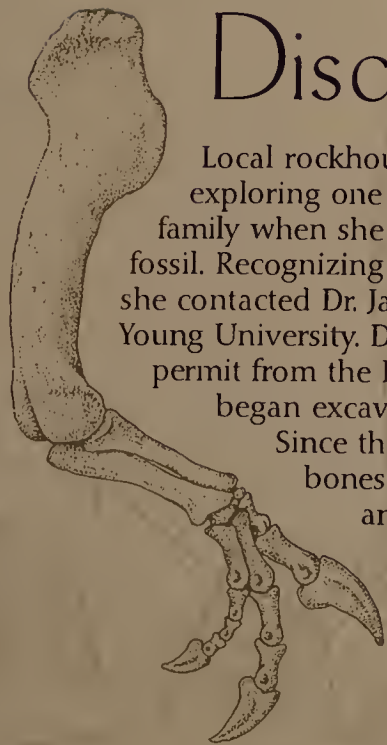
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